MS. A. 1.1 v.8, p. 45B

Roxbury, May 18, 1874.

Dear Wendell:

Ellie informs me that you have written to William, (who has gone to the western part of this State on business,) that Mr. McKim's symptoms are again quite unfavorable, so that he requires an additional quantity of morphine to alleviate his pain and quiet his nerves. Not having seen your letter, I cannot tell precisely what you have written; but the bare statement, that my beloved friend is compelled to use so dangerous a sedative in greater proportion than heretofore, fills me with pest apprehension as to his condition. It may be that in his case nothing better can be resorted to; but, if so, the fatal end cannot be far distant. I am strongly of the opinion that Chief Justice Chase, Senator Sumner and Prof. Agassiz were hurried out of existence by the same deadening (not to say deadly) process; and

that morphine is becoming a destroyer of human life on a wide scale. As Mr. McKim has always been so averse to a resort to drugs in cases of sickness, — Mrs. McKim having coincided with him in this feeling, — I marvel that he should now be inclined to rely upon perhaps the most seductive and dangerous of all opiates. Yet at this distance it is not for me to prescribe or judge what is best, and I am sure you will all be most anxious to have nothing left undone that can be done to procure a favorable result. My sympathies are strongly stirred for the suffering one, and for dear Mrs. McKim, Lucy and Charles. I do not know whether my presence will be of any assistance, or even advisable; and this you must decide after family consultation. My feelings strongly prompt me to hasten to Orange without delay, both as an act of friendship and as a sacred duty; and yet it may be better for me to wait awhile longer. Let me know.

through fear of putting me to some trouble, Mr. McKim may be unwilling to express a wish to see me; but, now that Fanny has come, I can leave your mother in good hands, and speedily be with you at the Park. It may be that you have now no spare chamber, and so would be put to serious inconvenience by my coming. Should that be the real difficulty, doubtless my old friend William Green would be both able and glad to provide a bed for me at his house. But I submit all these considerations to your good judgment.

Harry will leave for New York tomorrow, on his way to Oregon. He has had no ill turn here, and is stouter than ever — unfortunately so. Fanny is blooming as a rose, and the children are gaining daily in weight and strength, and all are very happy. Your mother is unusually comfortable, and only my rheumatism is a hindrance to me.

Your loving Father.

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